Anti-Racism Packet:

Sunrise Movement Middlebury's Guide to Our Hub, Our Involvement, and Racial Justice

Fall 2020

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OUR HUB'S ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT

Sunrise Middlebury stands in solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives and the protestors that refuse to accept a status quo that perpetuates violence and inequity. The reason the world is careening towards climate catastrophe is the very reason why we have so much inequality in this country: the well-ingrained belief in America that some lives matter and others do not— that some lives are disposable and others are not. The fight for climate justice has to be a fight for racial justice.

Additional Resources:
Sunrise Movement Middlebury Hub Guide
The Characteristics Of White Supremacy Culture
Sunrise Stands with the Black Community
Sunrise Taking Action for Black Lives
NPR: Historian Ibram X. Kendi On 'How To Be An Antiracist'
Climate Activists: Here's Why Your Work Depends on Ending Police Violence
Sunrise BLM Resources
Sunrise SLAM Study Group—Syllabus

Table of Abbreviations:
Below features some key abbreviations used throughout this document.

Abbreviation	**Meaning**
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
GND	Green New Deal
JEAO	Justice, Equity, and Anti-Oppression
SLAM	Sunrise Learning About Movements (study group)

If you are interested in joining BIPOC In The Environment, please fill out this interest form.

SUNRISE MIDDLEBURY HUB GUIDE: AMENDMENT 1

Section on Justice, Equity, and Anti-Oppression ("Bill of Rights")

Everyone is welcome to join Sunrise Middlebury, regardless of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, culture, or ethnicity.

From National:

- We cannot successfully address the climate crisis without addressing the ongoing effects of colonialism, slavery, white supremacy, and capitalism
- The work Sunrise is doing is NOT currently successfully addressing the continuing impacts of colonization, genocide, slavery, and capitalism
- We cannot win without prioritizing JEAO work and we want to prioritize JEAO work
- We want to make a goal of growing the percentage of BIPOC people in our membership base by cultivating a community of inclusivity
- We should support climate because it is good for BIPOC, not support BIPOC because it is good for the climate.

So what are we doing about this?

Beginning and end of the semester assessments:

Use the JEAO assessment to self assess as a board and as a hub
Give space for anonymous concerns, complaints, suggestions, etc. and fully address them as necessary
Board members should complete personal assessments using the Characteristics of White Supremacy as a guide once a month

Membership: Recruit, Retain, Develop framework

Collaborations between Engagement, JEAO, and Communications Coordinators
Making positions of power accessible, especially for BIPOC individuals (however, being wary of tokenization)
1:1's for supporting and talking through capacity (making sure the board is intentional about these relationships)

Protesting: How do we protect students of color/undocumented citizens when protesting?

Creating a non-judgemental community about protesting as being only ONE of the tools for making change

- Ensuring everyone knows that protesting is optional and completely by one's own volition
- Plugging into relevant trainings (ICE intervention, de-escalation, legal observers)

Accessibility: How do we make our events and meetings accessible to as many people as possible (closed captioning, etc.)?

- For each event or action, we will determine what is necessary for that specific event, as we don't have the funds to pay for a translator
- We can ensure that we have students/professors decently proficient in other languages, such as ASL, Spanish, etc, especially for larger events

Educating our members: understanding that all of our members may not have the same background when it comes to the GND and environmental justice

- JEAO Mini-Lesson at the beginning/end of each meeting
- Continuing our study group at some capacity/taking lessons from SLAM/having it be a thing we do over academics breaks..?
- Have JEAO as an agenda item for EVERY meeting

Onboarding: Welcome packet for new members

- Required materials to consume when joining Sunrise
- Urge all hub coordinators to attend National's training, 'Building a More Just Hub,' and let the coordinators pass on key information
- All members should be encouraged to attend other trainings led by Sunrise National regarding JEAO

Partnerships: Having relationships with other organizations that are 2-way streets; showing up for them and having them show up for us

- Partnerships Coordinator and JEAO Coordinator can collaborate here
- Not important to put a climate spin on everything, just showing up for support as an ally and in solidarity

Having a working group headed by JEAO Coordinator:

- This group would plan trainings, and ensure that everything in this section of the Guide is being observed

OUR CURRENT INVOLVEMENT IN ANTI-RACISM INITIATIVES

Sunrise Movement Middlebury supports anti-racism initiatives and seeks to center racial justice in our work. Our goal is to integrate racial justice into every hub meeting and establish this work as an essential part of our organization.
We are involved in the following, as of August 2020:

- Establishing a method to center racial justice in our work
- Organizing a whole-hub meeting to discuss Justice, Equity, and Anti-Oppression
- Working to support the Middlebury Cops Off Campus initiative
- Building relationships with racial justice organizations on campus and in Vermont
- Collaborating with the social media team to share testimonies of students of color and amplify resources for the Movement for Black Lives
- Creating a racial justice reading guide for new members

The Movement For Black Lives:

Sunrise Middlebury stands in solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives and the protestors that refuse to accept a status quo that perpetuates violence and inequity. Sunrise's Tenth Principle states "We stand with other movements for change." Putting an end to climate change requires an intersectional approach that acknowledges that environmental and social justice are deeply connected. We will never reach the safe, just, and caring world that Sunrise fights for until we break down the white supremacist, patriarchal, and capitalist systems that are the root of the violence that people like George Floyd encounter every day. The reason the world is careening towards climate catastrophe is the very reason why we have so much inequality in this country: the well-ingrained belief in America that some lives matter and others do not— that some lives are disposable and others are not. We are not free until we are all free.

We would like to acknowledge that the environmental movement's history has often been characterized by racism and exclusion. The Sunrise Movement is committed to changing that narrative. **The fight for climate justice has to be a fight for racial justice.**

The Middlebury Cops Off Campus Initiative:

As a climate justice organization, we recognize and support initiatives that target and work to dismantle systems of oppression. Our hub collectively voted in support of police abolition, and in line with that official stance, we stand in solidarity with the Middlebury Cops Off Campus initiative to make Middlebury a safer place for all members of our community, particularly Black students. The abolition of the police force and the prison-industrial complex are absolutely necessary for a just future. The systems of oppression that cause BIPOC, especially Black individuals to be disproportionately affected by environmental racism are the same systems that perpetuate racism and white supremacy in law enforcement and the prison-industrial complex. The current model of PubSafe, as well as the Middlebury police on campus, are manifestations of these systems. We believe that the Middlebury community has the creativity and ability to replace them with something better. We support student-led initiatives that reimagine what real safety and community look like on our campus.

Environmentalism's Racist History

*It would be wrong for us to fail to recognize the damage that environmentalism has done to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and continues to do. Climate justice, and environmentalism as a whole, must include BIPOC. We must root out white supremacy in ourselves, our communities, our movements, and our country. We cannot adequately address the climate crisis until we do so. The same systems that lead to climate catastrophe perpetuate inequality. We cannot have environmental justice without racial justice. A fight for the Earth must also be a fight for humankind.

John Muir and Preservation:
Mainstream environmentalism was built on two main ideas: preservation and conservation. Preservation separates humans from land, conservation recognizes that humans and land can coexist. The preservation movement was started by John Muir, "father of the national parks" and founder of the Sierra Club, who aimed to protect lands from humankind, so the land could be preserved for future generations. It is essential to note that John Muir had a racist history and close friendships with key leaders of the eugenics movement, especially Henry Fairfield Osborn.

Muir's idea of preservation eliminated humans from nature and ignored the rights of Indigenous Peoples to their land & livelihood. By protecting land from all of humankind, preservation hurts Indigenous Peoples and communities. Most infamously, John Muir fought for the establishment of Yosemite National Park, at the expense of Indigenous communities being forced from their ancestral land.
John Muir is not the only intensely problematic "forefather" of modern environmentalism. Read more about him and other early founders of the environmentalist movement with racist histories here.

Michael Brune, the current executive director of the Sierra Club, summed up the impact of the environmental movement's racism like this: "The whiteness and privilege of our early membership fed into a very dangerous idea -- one that's still circulating today. It's the idea that exploring, enjoying, and protecting the outdoors can be separated from human affairs. Such willful ignorance is what allows some people to shut their eyes to the reality that the wild places we love are also the ancestral homelands of Indigenous peoples, forced off their lands in the decades or centuries before they became national parks. It allows them to overlook, too, the fact that only people insulated from systemic racism and brutality can afford to focus solely on preserving wilderness. Black communities, Indigenous communities, and communities of color continue to endure the traumatic burden of fighting for their right to a healthy environment while simultaneously fighting for freedom from discrimination and police violence."

Additional Resources:
Mother Jones: Anti-Immigration White Supremacy Has Deep Roots in the Environmental Movement
Sierra Club: Pulling Down Our Monuments
Vice: It's Dark in Those Woods- Tracing Environmentalism to Eugenics (Part Two)
The New Yorker: Environmentalism's Racist History
TedXMiddlebury: Whose Story Counts? | Carolyn Finney

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN RACIAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

Racial Justice:
Racial justice is "the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts, and outcomes for all." Racial justice relies on the recognition of historic and current systemic inequality and seeks to dismantle a system of white supremacy and work towards a society based on equity and respect. Justice goes beyond "the absence of discrimination and inequities, but [works to establish] the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures."

Climate Justice:
Climate justice seeks to establish the reality that climate change is as much a moral and political issue as it is an environmental and physical one. It recognizes that the systems that perpetuate climate change are the same systems that actively work against communities of color and low-income communities; and that the communities most affected by the climate crisis, with the fewest resources to adapt to the crisis, do the least to contribute to the crisis.
Climate change disproportionately affects communities of color and low-income communities, both globally and in the United States, making climate change a human rights issue. Climate justice aims to dismantle the systems that cause climate catastrophe and perpetuate systemic inequality, and instead create a more just and equitable future for all.

Climate Justice Relies on Racial Justice:

- Until the changes to adequately address systemic racial and economic inequality occur, and equity to these communities is restored, climate change will continue to disproportionately affect these communities.
- In order to achieve true equity, climate justice work must include communities of color and low-income communities.
- In order to create a more just and equitable future for all, we must support efforts which center and uplift BIPOC individuals.

Racial justice is essential to true climate justice.

Additional Resources:
The Guardian: Environmental justice means racial justice, say activists
The NAACP: Environmental and Climate Justice
Racial Equity Tools Glossary
Being Antiracist
The YIKES Podcast
Vogue: Why Every Environmentalist Should Be Anti-Racist

Environmental Racism

Environmental Racism:

In 1982, African American civil rights leader Benjamin Chavis coined the term "environmental racism," describing it as "racial discrimination in environmental policy-making, the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and the history of excluding people of color from leadership of the ecology movements." Environmental racism is a form of systemic racism that results in marginalized communities (primarily populated by people of color and people of lower socioeconomic status) being burdened with a disproportionate number of environmentally-related hazards.

For more information on environmental racism:

Sociology: Reading- Environmental Racism
We Forum: What is environmental racism and how can we fight it?
NCCJ: Environmental Justice
The Nation: Race Best Predicts Whether You Live Near Pollution
The Nation: A New EPA Report Shows That Environmental Racism is Real
Sunrise Middlebury: Local and National Resources About Environmental Racism
Greenaction: Environmental Justice & Environmental Racism

Environmental Racism and Climate Change:

As climate change perpetuates any existing environmental issues, the effects of environmental racism on the health and wellbeing of minority communities will continue to get worse. As the frequency of extreme weather events increases with climate change, unless systemic disaster prevention and recovery changes are made, marginalized communities will continue to be among the worst affected by these crises. Additionally, as climate change, in addition to land mismanagement and freshwater usage, aggravates soil erosion and degradation, the quantity of food-producing rich soil will continue to decrease, possibly worsening the accessibility of affordable and nutritious food in many communities already considered food deserts. Furthermore, as heatwaves become hotter, longer, and more frequent as a byproduct of climate change, Black and Brown urban communities in historically redlined areas will continue to die at higher rates than their white urban counterparts during heat waves because they live in heat islands, where the temperature is magnified by the concrete, asphalt, and lack of greenery. As a result of environmental racism, the effects of climate change on marginalized communities and populations are far-reaching and just beginning to be understood. We need systemic change to eliminate the climate gap, the difference in environmental effects between BIPOC and whites.

For more information on the effects of climate change on environmental racism:

Scientific American: Climate Change Hits Poor Hardest in the U.S.
Global Change: Climate Change Impacts on Society
Minority Rights: The Impact of Climate Change on Minorities and Indigenous Peoples
Lung.org: Disparities in the Impact of Air Pollution
Scientific American: COVID-19 & Climate Change Threats Compound in Minority Communities

Carbon Brief: Explainer- Desertification and the role of climate change
NASA: The Rising Cost of Natural Hazards
New York Times: Climate Change Tied to Pregnancy Risks, Affecting Black Mothers Most

Environmental Racism by The Numbers:

55% of those living within 3km of a hazardous waste facility are people of color.
Black people are exposed to 50% more air pollution than white people.
The percentage of African-American children suffering from Asthma is 2x that of white children and their death rate is 10x higher.
Communities with more people of color are 40% more likely to have unlawfully safe drinking water.

Additional Resources:
US EPA: Environmental Justice Timeline
Nature: How environmental racism is fuelling the coronavirus pandemic
Time: Why the Larger Climate Movement Is Finally Embracing the Fight Against Environmental Racism
Time: The Climate-Change Community Desperately Needs to Address Historic Inequities

Intersectional Environmentalism

Intersectional Environmentalism:
According to Leah Thomas, the activist and eco-communicator who coined the term, Intersectional Environmentalism "is an inclusive version of environmentalism that advocates for both the protection of people and the planet. It identifies the ways in which injustices happening to marginalized communities and the earth are interconnected. It brings injustices done to the most vulnerable communities, and the earth, to the forefront and does not minimize or silence social inequality. Intersectional environmentalism advocates for justice for people and the planet."

In its essence, intersectional environmentalism recognizes that the same systems that bring injustice to marginalized communities are the same systems that bring injustice to the Earth. It is impossible to adequately address the climate crisis without addressing the social, moral, and economic crises of racism, sexism, classism, and more. In regard to anti-racism and environmentalism, Leah Thomas stated that "the systems of oppression that have led to the deaths of so many Black people were the same systems that perpetuated environmental injustice." Climate justice must also be a fight for human justice.

Additional Resources:
Intersectional Environmentalist Website
Vogue: Why Every Environmentalist Should Be Anti-Racist
Intersectional Environmentalism: Why Environmental Justice Is Essential For A Sustainable Future
Green Girl Leah Website and Blog
Youth To The People: Intersectional Environmentalism Is Our Urgent Way Forward
Instagram: Leah Thomas (@greengirlleah)
National Geographic: The environmental movement is very white. These leaders want to change that.
The Atlantic: Environmentalism Was Once a Social-Justice Movement
Foreign Policy: How Conservation Became Colonialism
KQED: The Youth Activists Behind the Standing Rock Resistance
Solutions Journal: Food Sovereignty in Rebellion: Decolonization, Autonomy, Gender Equity, and the Zapatista Solution

Sunrise Movement and Racial Justice

Important digital resources:
https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/

- This website provides a variety of data on police violence within different departments in the United States. It clearly illustrates the disproportionate rate at which black individuals are affected by police brutality. The website also gives detailed descriptions on police killings in the past years.

https://www.joincampaignzero.org

- Campaign Zero is an organization seeking to promote community-based solutions to police brutality. They collect and organize data on police brutality and are actively working to change the policing system in America to create a country free from police violence.

Nomorecopmoney.com

- No More Cop Money documents campaign funds given by law enforcement associations to different political candidates. On this website you can search which politicians are taking money from law enforcement organizations and how much they are taking.

https://colorofchange.org

- Color of Change is an organization dedicated to uplifting black communities in America. They lead campaigns that work to dismantle oppressive systems and promote justice in economic, social, and political spheres.

https://sunrisemovementwhb.wixsite.com/officialsite/black-lives-matter

- A list of educational resources/organizations to support created by Sunrise.